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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-07 PM-05 DODE-00 EB-08
AID-05 CG-00 DOTE-00 DLOS-09 AGRE-00 COME-00
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 /080 W
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P R 121312Z APR 78
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4220
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BISSAU
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CONAKRY 0726

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, PLOS, PEPR, EWWT, MARR, MASS, PARM, PBOR, GV
SUBJECT: GUINEAN OFFSHORE FISHING

REF: STATE 090967

1. FISHING IS IMPORTANT TO GUINEAN ECONOMY AND WILL PROBABLY GROW IN IMPORTANCE. LARGE PART OF CONAKRY'S POPULATION PLUS THAT OF COASTAL AREAS EAT FISH AS SOURCE OF PROTEIN IN SOCIETY WHERE OTHER PROTEIN SOURCES ARE SCARCE. SIZEABLE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED AS FISHERMEN. SMALL-SCALE FISHING IN MECHANICALLY OR MANUALLY POWERED CANOES OR SAILBOATS IN COMMON. THIS SECTOR HAS NOMINALLY COME UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL BUT IN PRACTICE IS STILL RELATIVELY FREE. GOG HAS NO WAY TO ESTIMATE ACTUAL SMALL-SCALE FISHING CATCH FOR GUINEA. ALL FISH CAUGHT BY SMALL-SCALE FISHERMEN ARE CONSUMED LOCALLY. INDUSTRIAL FISHING IS DONE BY GOG IN CHINESE-BUILT AND MAINTAINED TRAWLERS THAT OFTEN ARE OUT OF COMMISSION.
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THE CATCH FROM THESE BOATS IS NOT THOUGHT TO BE SIGNIFICANT BUT IS FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION. LARGE-SCALE FOREIGN COMMERCIAL FISHING OPERATES AS DISCUSSED IN PARA 4, ABOUT 75 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION OF FOREIGN-FLAG FISHING VESSELS BEING EXPORTED, 25 PERCENT CONSUMED LOCALLY. POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS ARE CONSIDERABLE AND ARE DISCUSSED BELOW.

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2. AS IN MANY COUNTRIES OF WEST AFRICA, GUINEA'S COASTAL WATERS ARE BELIEVED TO BE RICH IN FISHING RESOURCES. GUINEA APPEARS TO HAVE GOOD POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SHRIMP, LOBSTER, RED SNAPPER, TUNA FISHERIES AT LEAST. OTHERS MAY DEVELOP AS BIOLOGICAL DATA ABOUT GUINEAN COASTAL WATERS BECOMES AVAILABLE. FAO OPERATES A UNDP PROJECT FOR RESEARCH AND CANADIAN TRUST FUND PROJECT FOR FISHING DEVELOPMENT. GOG ALSO PLANS A FUTURE FISH-MEAL PLANT.

3. OFFSHORE FISHING IS REGULATED BY BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH EAST-BLOC COUNTRIES, AND PRIVATE AGREEMENTS WITH WESTERN FIRMS. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT MEASURES ARE ALMOST UNENFORCEABLE DUE TO LACK OF PATROL BOATS AND SKILLED PERSONNEL. FEE FOR THOSE LICENSED TO FISH GUINEAN WATERS IS NORMALLY 25 PERCENT OF CATCH BY TONNAGE PLUS ADDI-TIONAL ROYALTIES, TRAINING IN SOME CASES, AND PETTY OVERHEAD. HOWEVER, SOURCES HERE BELIEVE THAT COMPANIES UNDERSTATE TONNAGE AND GIVE GOG QUALITATIVELY LEAST VALUABLE 25 PERCENT OF THEIR CATCH.

4. PRINCIPAL LICENSED FOREIGN FISHING VESSELS ARE FROM USSR, SOUTH KOREA, ITALY (AS PART OF GREEK/ITALIAN FIRM). JAPANESE AND AMERICAN PRIVATE FISHING VENTURES NO LONGER OPERATE. POACHING IS OR HAS BEEN DONE MAINLY BY GREEK
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FIRMS, USSR (VESSELS IN EXCESS OF THOSE LICENSED) AND NORTH KOREA. POACHING MAY NOT NOW BE REDUCING TOTAL LEGAL CATCH, SINCE GUINEAN FISHING RESOURCES ARE NOT FULLY UTILIZED, BUT IT MAY BE DOING SERIOUS LONG-TERM DAMAGE TO FISHING POTENTIAL.

5. GUINEA CLAIMS 200-MILE LIMIT. GUINEA AND GUINEA-BISSAU HAVE DISAGREED OVER EXTENT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE WATERS. DISAGREEMENT WAS DISCUSSED IN EARLY 1978 AT FOREIGN-MINISTER LEVEL. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHAT HAS RESULTED FROM TALKS.

6. SEIZURE OF A SOVIET FISHING VESSEL IN JUNE 1977 ADDED TO STRAINED AOTED AT TIME IN GUINEAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, EVEN THOUGH INCIDENT WAS RESOLVED QUICKLY AND RELA-TIVELY LENIENTLY BY GUINEA. SEIZURE OF SEVERAL SOUTH KOREAN CRAFT IN JULY 1977 LED TO CONTACTS WITH SOUTH KOREAN REPRESENTATIVES AND, SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH, EVEN-TUALLY TO A COMMERCIAL FISHING AGREEMENT FOLLOWED BY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WHERE NONE HAD EXISTED BEFORE. SEVERAL GREEK BOATS ALSO WERE SEIZED BUT WITH NO POLI-

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TICAL CONSEQUENCES. VESSELS SEIZED BY GUINEA-BISSAU WITHIN WATERS WHICH BOTH GUINEA AND GUINEA-BISSAU CLAIM LED TO FOREIGN-MINISTER-LEVEL DISCUSSIONS (ABOVE) AND RAISED DORMANT PROBLEM OF OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION.

7. WE ESTIMATE THAT GUINEA WOULD MUCH PREFER TO POLICE ITS OWN WATERS UNILATERALLY WITH ITS OWN PATROL BOATS. IT WOULD BE AMENABLE TO INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, HOWEVER, AND RECONCILIATION WITH SENEGAL AND IVORY COAST MAY CREATE CONDITIONS IN WHICH GUINEA WILL BE MORE INTERESTED IN REGIONAL, FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMS IF ADVANTAGE TO GUINEA IS CLEAR. GUINEA IN 1977 REQUESTED PATROL CRAFT FROM THE US AND IS EXPLORING COMMERCIAL PURCHASE POSSIBILITIES WITH
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